

**Submission to Draft Regional Spatial Economic Strategy by Marc Mac Sharry TD
February 8th 2019.**

Dear Sir / Madam

I write to make my a submission as a Dail representative for Sligo Leitrim South Donegal & West Cavan. I am concerned that the Sligo Greenway does not appear as an objective to achieve within the new Regional Spatial Economic Strategies (RSES). This is a project I fully support and hope to see it get approval as part of the National Greenway Strategy.

I note in particular, with reference to the closed railway from Athenry to Collooney that Objectives 115 (a) and 115 (b) do not mention any alternative uses of the closed railway until such time as the railway may be possible; this has to be examined further. Whilst I very much support and would like to see the Western Rail Corridor re-opened, I am conscious that we must be cognisant of delivery versus the availability of the necessary capital while also making optimum use of the available resource which the railway and the surrounding lands offer.

I would like to make the NWRA aware that the Executive of Sligo County Council with the full support of the Council members and my full support as the local TD, made a submission to the DTTAS in November 2018 seeking funding for The Sligo Greenway project as part of the National Greenway Strategy call for funding from the DTTAS. The proposed Sligo Greenway will utilise the route of the closed railway from Collooney to Bellaghy/Charlestown under a strict license from Irish Rail that if the route is ever needed for railway in the future then railway will take precedence. I believe this to be a sensible and fair way to approach this issue, it takes on board the views of those who support both the Railway including myself and the Greenway until a railway is achievable.

The Regional Assembly and those drafting the RSES need to be aware of the support I am giving this community driven project within my constituency.

I therefore request that Objective number 115 (a) and 115(b) be amended to read as follows:

Objective 115 revised: The reopening of the Western Rail Corridor is entirely dependent on the outcome of the current rail review of the closed railway line from Athenry to Claremorris, the route north of Claremorris is not part of the Rail Review and the line is classified as closed. It is critical the railway route needs to be protected in public ownership. In the event the railway review indicates the Western Rail Corridor will not re-open within the timeframe of the RSES, by 2030, then other projects such as a greenway on the closed railway route and adjacent lands which will fulfil the strategic objectives of the National Greenway Strategy should be an objective, in order to protect the route in public ownership until such time as a railway is possible.

I believe this revision to objective 115 will fairly reflect the views of those that support a railway and those that support a greenway and will be far more balanced. I myself support both. The proposed Sligo Greenway is a project which many people in Sligo as well as the Sligo County Council and myself as a sitting TD in the Constituency support. The RSES need to reflect the views of the public and the views of the public representative.

I thank you for taking the time to consider this submission and very much hope that you can accept the proposed amendment

Yours sincerely

Marc Mac Sharry TD